

Don Hoch
Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
1111 Israel Road S.W. P.O. Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98504-2650 (360) 902-8500

NEWS

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Media contacts:

[Randy Kline](#), (360) 902-8632

[Toni Droscher](#), (360) 902-8604

Wash. Telecommunications Relay Service:
(800) 833-6388

State Parks invites public on tour of South Whidbey Island State Park

Forest health issues to be discussed

OLYMPIA – Aug. 26, 2015 – The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is offering two public walking tours to learn about the issues that led to the campground closure earlier this spring at South Whidbey State Park.

The first tour will begin at 1 p.m. and the second at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 16, at South Whidbey Island State Park, 4128 S. Smugglers Cove Rd., Freeland. (Directions: <https://goo.gl/maps/NsQi6>) The park tour will be led by Robert Fimbel, State Parks Stewardship Program. The tours will leave from the day-use parking area. Each tour is about 90 minutes, with ample time for questions and answers. No Discover Pass will be required for those attending the tours.

In spring 2015, park staff preparing for the upcoming camping season noted that several large Douglas-fir trees in the campground had snapped and fallen across campsites. A forest pathologist found advanced heart rot in the stems of large old-growth trees in the park—a condition that can result in falling trees and limbs. As a public safety precaution, State Parks management closed the state park to overnight camping. The park is still open for day use.

The condition of the trees and the closure of the campground prompted State Parks to begin a public planning process to determine future recreation use and needs of the park. The first of several public meetings will take place this fall. Anyone with questions about the walking tour or participating in or learning more about the planning effort for South Whidbey Island State Park may contact Randy Kline, Parks Planner, randy.kline@parks.wa.gov or (360) 902-8632

About South Whidbey Island State Park

South Whidbey Island State Park is a 347-acre park with 4,500 feet of saltwater shoreline on Admiralty Inlet. The park is known for its old-growth forest, tidelands and breathtaking views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. For more information, visit:

<http://www.parks.wa.gov/585/South-Whidbey-Island>

About Washington State Parks

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages more than 100 state parks and properties totaling approximately 120,000 acres. The Commission provides a variety of recreation opportunities for citizens and provides stewardship protection for a diverse array of natural, cultural and historic resources. State Parks' statewide programs include long-distance trails, boating safety and winter recreation.

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Support state parks by purchasing your annual Discover Pass today, and enjoy a whole year of outdoor fun on Washington's beautiful state-managed recreation lands. For more information, visit www.discoverpass.wa.gov.